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ALTUS PROVES HIGH ALTITUDE CAPABILITY
Posted: Fri Mar 12 11:15:53 BST 1999

ALTUS II climbed to an altitude of more than 55,000 feet, to a density altitude of 57,000+ feet above sea level, announced General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc (GAASI), California on 8 March 1999.

With a gross take-off weight of 2,150 lbs, it reaching 55,000 feet in less than 2 hours. The outside temperature was 74° F. The Rotax engine integrated with two Thermo Mechanical Systems turbo chargers, allowed it to operate above 55,000 feet.

In April of 1999, ALTUS II will participate in a programme to demonstrate the scientific research capabilities of this aircraft at altitudes above 60,000 feet. These capabilities include "sniffing" the atmosphere and collecting data on global warming issues.

ALTUS is currently tasked to fly several altitude flights for the Department of Energy/Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (DOE/ARM) deployment to Hawaii in mid-April.

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Posted: Mon Jul 6 17:08:38 BST 1998

On 29 June 1998 the General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc (GA-ASI) ALTUS II high altitude unmanned aircraft, reconfigured with a Rotax engine and two new thermo mechanical systems turbo chargers, successfully completed its first flight.

During its 30-minute flight the ALTUS II reached a maximum altitude of 7,500 feet where routine system and engine checks were conducted.

Under the Environmental Research Aircraft and Sensor Technology (ERAST) programme, led by the NASA Dryden Flight Research Centre, Edwards, California, GA-ASI will demonstrate the capabilities of ALTUS II to reach altitudes of up to 65,000 feet later this summer.

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ALTUS USED IN CLIMATE STUDY

Posted: Wed May 12 14:29:04 BST 1999

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc(GA-ASI), announced on 10 May 1999 that its ALTUS unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is participating in studies being undertaken in Hawaii.

The measurements are being compiled to develop a global picture of how solar energy enters the atmosphere and moves within and through clouds.

"We measure solar energy that is transmitted and reflected by cirrus clouds, and this helps us understand the effect these clouds have on climate," said Dr. Peter Pilewskie, a principal investigator at NASA's Ames Research Centre, Moffett Field, California. "The clouds redistribute the solar energy received by earth from the sun; they also emit and absorb radiant energy at longer wavelengths. Some of the light is scattered back into space, some is transmitted down to the lower atmosphere and some is absorbed by the cloud."

"Last week's flights were the first of six to eight flights we plan to conduct through to 19 May 1999," said Dr. Will R. Bolton of Sandia's Livermore, California, laboratory, who is responsible for engineering aspects of the overall technical programme. "The flights are both a scientific mission and a demonstration of the capability of using a UAV in a sub-tropical environment."

In the future, climate research may be undertaken in a deep tropical region, closer to the equator, where tropical

storms are responsible for bringing much moisture from the ocean into the atmosphere in a process that drives the dynamics of weather patterns. The scientists' long-term goal is to develop enough information to improve the accuracy of predictive models of climate change.

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RISTA II DEBUTS ON ALTUS

Posted: Thu Sep 10 16:53:01 BST 1998

RISTA II, an advanced passive infrared airborne imaging system developed by Northrop Grumman's Electronic Sensors and Systems Sector, was successfully demonstrated for the first time ever on a UAV during a series of recent flights at the U.S. Army's Camp Roberts, California.

More information is contained in [Unmanned Vehicles](#) magazine, October 1998.

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